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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine current and former students' and local employers' satisfaction with South Seattle Community College's (SSCC's) Landscape and Environmental Horticulture Department. Specifically, the study gathered data on four outcomes: that students receive an education allowing them to meet goals; that students be satisfied with facilities, equipment, and quality of instruction; that employers be satisfied with program graduates; and that customers of the Department's Garden Center receive quality products and services. Study findings included the following: (1) 81% of the former students were currently employed in the landscape and horticulture field; (2) 74% of former students were satisfied to a high extent with the quality of instruction; (3) however, fewer than one-third of the former students were satisfied with the number of teachers and work space, and fewer than one-in-five were satisfied to a high extent with equipment and supplies; (4) over 95% of current students agreed that training was of high quality, current with industry standards, met their expectations, and will be useful on the job; (5) all 10 employers who had hired former students were satisfied with the graduates' attitudes, motivation, safety practices, and workplace values, but only 60% were very satisfied with their employees punctuality; and (6) 90% of the Garden Center customers were satisfied with the overall services provided, but only 60% were satisfied with prices. (The survey instruments are appended.) (KP)

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ED 381 221

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT PROCESS
1993-94

HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS DIVISION

LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT

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SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

JC 950 218

South Seattle Community College
Service Occupations
Landscape and Environmental Horticulture Department
Executive Summary

Major Findings related to Criteria

Outcome 1. Students will receive an educational experience which will allow them to meet their stated goals.

Criteria 1: 70% of those students whose stated goal is employment will report employment in the field.

- 81% of the former students, and 82% of those former students whose stated goal was a career in the landscape and horticulture field, are currently employed in the field. One-half of the students are currently employed in the same specialty they indicated as a career goal when they entered the program.

Outcome 2. Former students and current students will be satisfied with the facilities and equipment, and the quality of instruction.

Criteria 2: 75% of the respondents to the Former Student Survey and the Current Student Survey will report satisfaction with the facilities and equipment in the program, and 75% will report satisfaction with the quality of instruction.

Former Students:

- 74% of the former students reported being satisfied to a high extent with the quality of instruction in the Landscape and Horticulture program. Almost half (45%) were satisfied, to a high extent, with the simulated shop experience.

- Former students were less satisfied with the physical facilities. Fewer than one-third of the former students were satisfied with the number of teachers and the work space. Very few, fewer than one in five, were satisfied, to a high extent, with the equipment and supplies; only 13% were satisfied with the facilities. Almost half (48%) were dissatisfied with the facilities, and 39% were dissatisfied with the equipment and supplies.

Current Students:

- Overall, current students are very satisfied with the Landscape and Horticulture program at South Seattle Community College. Over 95% of the current students agree with the following statements: the instruction and training is of high quality and current with industry standards; the program meets their expectations; the information in the program relates to what they will do in their jobs; and the training will be useful on the job. 86% of the current students agree that the program has given them a better understanding of safety factors when using landscaping tools and equipment.

- Over 95% of the students also agree that the general education courses have prepared them for practical applications in the program.

Outcome 3. Employers will be satisfied with the graduates of the Landscape and Environmental Horticulture program.

Criteria 3: 75% of the employers will report that they are satisfied with the SSCC training received by their employees.

Ten employers who had hired SSCC Landscape and Horticulture former students rated their satisfaction with their employees on five aspects of their work: overall performance, attitude and motivation, punctuality, workplace values, and safety practices.

- All ten of the employers (100%) were satisfied with SSCC Landscape and Horticulture former students on all five of the characteristics.

- Employers were most satisfied with their employees' attitudes and motivation (80% very satisfied). Employers were also very satisfied with their employees' safety practices and workplace values (70% - 80% very satisfied). Employers were least satisfied with their employees' punctuality (only 60% very satisfied).

Outcome 4. Customers of the Garden Center will receive quality products and services in a cost effective manner.

Criteria 4: 80% of the customers of the Garden Center will report a high degree of satisfaction with the products and services. 80% would recommend the retail facility to their friends.

- Almost all of the customers of the Garden Center were satisfied with the overall services provided (90% satisfied) and the appearance of the shop (100% satisfied). Only 60% of the customers, however, were satisfied with the prices in the shop, and 10% were dissatisfied.

- 70% of the customers reported that they had recommended the SSCC Garden Center to their friends.

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SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS DIVISION
HORTICULTURE/ENVIRONMENTAL LANDSCAPE DEPARTMENT
EMPLOYER SURVEY

1. Have you ever employed an SSCC student/graduate? ☐ YES ☐ NO

2. Do you currently have an SSCC graduate in your employ? ☐ YES ☐ NO

3. If not, would you hire an SSCC graduate if there was an opening? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If you have never hired an SSCC graduate, please skip to question # 6

4. Please rate how satisfied you are/were with the overall work of SSCC former students.
☐ Very Satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ N/A

5. Please rate how satisfied you were with the following skills:

Attitude/Motivation
☐ Very Satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ N/A

Punctuality
☐ Very Satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ N/A

Workplace Values
☐ Very Satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ N/A

Safety Practices
☐ Very Satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ N/A

6. How would you rate the importance of the following skills/knowledge in hiring an employee:

Cashier skills	☐ Very Important	☐ Somewhat Important	☐ Not Important	☐ Not Applicable
Telephone skills	☐ Very Important	☐ Somewhat Important	☐ Not Important	☐ Not Applicable
Communications skills	☐ Very Important	☐ Somewhat Important	☐ Not Important	☐ Not Applicable
Sales	☐ Very Important	☐ Somewhat Important	☐ Not Important	☐ Not Applicable
Basic design skills (landscape & irrigation)	☐ Very Important	☐ Somewhat Important	☐ Not Important	☐ Not Applicable
Basic landscape Management Skills	☐ Very Important	☐ Somewhat Important	☐ Not Important	☐ Not Applicable
Computer skills	☐ Very Important	☐ Somewhat Important	☐ Not Important	☐ Not Applicable
Purchasing skills	☐ Very Important	☐ Somewhat Important	☐ Not Important	☐ Not Applicable
Previous work experience	☐ Very Important	☐ Somewhat Important	☐ Not Important	☐ Not Applicable

7. Please add any comments that you feel would help better prepare students for employment in the industry.

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SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS DIVISION
LANDSCAPE AND HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT
FORMER STUDENT SURVEY

Dear Former Students and Alumni:

Please answer this questionnaire about the training you received at SSCC. Providing this information will enable South Seattle Community College to better tailor their training to the needs of the industry we serve. Please darken the bubbles with a # 2 pencil. Please avoid making any stray marks on the form. We would greatly appreciate it if you would return the survey without stapling or folding it by April 15, 1994.

Thank you very much for your participation. Receiving your response, and the responses from other former students, is very important to us.

1. When you entered SSCC, what was your intended career goal in the landscape and horticulture industry?
   - ☐ Landscape Designer
   - ☐ Nursery Manager (retail and wholesale)
   - ☐ Own landscape business
   - ☐ Garden Center
   - ☐ Indoor Landscape
   - ☐ Personal Interests
   - ☐ Other _____

2. Did you complete the program? ☐ YES ☐ NO

3. What year did you exit the program?
   ☐ Before 1989 ☐ 1989 ☐ 1990 ☐ 1991 ☐ 1992 ☐ 1993

4. What is your current employment status?
   - ☐ Employed
   - ☐ Self-Employed
   - ☐ F/T Military
   - ☐ Unemployed, seeking a job
   - ☐ Not employed, not seeking a job

6. Please select the sector of the Landscape and Environmental Horticultural Industry in which you are currently employed (please choose one).
   - ☐ Designer - Landscape, Irrigation
   - ☐ Garden Center Manager
   - ☐ Own Business
   - ☐ Landscape Consulting
   - ☐ Landscape Maintenance (residential, commercial, industrial)
   - ☐ Integrated Pest Management
   - ☐ Other _____
   - ☐ Not in the industry

7. How many hours per week do you work?
   ☐ less than 20 hours ☐ 21 - 30 hours ☐ 31 - 40 hours ☐ more than 40 hours

8. What is your gross annual income?
   - ☐ Under $5000
   - ☐ $5000 - $10,000
   - ☐ $10,000 - $15,000
   - ☐ $15,000 - $20,000
   - ☐ $20,000 - $30,000
   - ☐ $30,000 - $40,000
   - ☐ Over $40,000

9. If you are not currently working in the landscape and environmental horticulture industry, what was the principal reason for leaving the industry?
   - ☐ I could not find employment
   - ☐ Pay scales were not sufficient
   - ☐ Hours were not acceptable
   - ☐ Stress
   - ☐ Other _____
   - ☐ Not Applicable, I am currently employed in the industry

10a. Are you currently attending school? ☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time ☐ Not Enrolled

10b. If you are enrolled in school, are you attending a ....
☐ 4-year college ☐ 2-year college ☐ Voc/Tech College

11. What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female

12. What is your age?
   - ☐ less than 25 years old
   - ☐ 26 - 35 years old
   - ☐ 36 - 45 years old
   - ☐ 46 - 55 years old
   - ☐ Over 55 years old

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LANDSCAPE AND HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT FORMER STUDENT SURVEY

Please continue to answer this questionnaire about the training you received at SSCC.
Please darken the bubbles with a # 2 pencil. Please avoid making any stray marks on the form.
We would appreciate it if you would return the survey without stapling or folding it
by April 15, 1994.

	Very High Extent	High Extent	Some Extent	Very Limited Extent	Not At All	Not Applicable
13. When you were a student at SSCC, to what extent were you satisfied with:						
the quality of instruction received?						
the maintenance of the facilities in our program?						
the equipment and supplies of your program?						
the available work space?						
the number of teachers?						
the simulated work experience in preparing you for the actual job?						
14. When you left SSCC, to what extent did you feel you had achieved your educational goals toward your career?						
15. To what extent did the training program prepare you adequately for the intensity of the industry?						
16. To what extent do you feel the training led you to a better position or placement in employment?						
17. To what extent do you feel the College was able to create an industry-like operation for instructional purposes?						
18. To what extent do you feel you received training reflecting current trends in the industry?						
19. To what extent do you feel computer classes should be included in training programs at SSCC?						
20. To what extent would you have been interested in taking an additional quarter of classes (including management/communication skills, business principles, and computer applications)?						
21. To what extent do you feel, as an alumni of SSCC, that the alumni should participate in department/division functions in promoting the following areas?						
Mentor programs						
Legislative lobbying						
Internships						
Fundraising						
Alumni Association						

Name of your business/employer: _____

Current job title : _____

City or Town you work in : _____

Current Duties : _____

_____

_____

PLEASE USE THE NEXT PAGE FOR ANY COMMENTS THAT YOU FEEL WILL IMPROVE THE PROGRAM - THANK YOU

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Comments:

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SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS DIVISION
LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE
CURRENT STUDENT SURVEY

Dear Student:

The purpose of this survey is to help the SSCC Landscape and Environmental Horticulture program meet the instruction and professional needs of its students.

Please answer each question by filling in the "bubble" with a #2 pencil. Please do not make any stray marks. Thank you very much for your input.

1. What was your career goal when you entered this instructional program?

- ☐ Landscape Designer
- ☐ Garden Center Manager
- ☐ Own Horticulture Business
- ☐ Garden Center (retail or wholesale)
- ☐ Irrigation Design
- ☐ Consulting
- ☐ Home
- ☐ Other _____

2. What is your career goal now?

- ☐ Urban Forester
- ☐ Landscape Designer
- ☐ Garden Center Manager
- ☐ Own Horticulture Business
- ☐ Garden Center (retail or wholesale)
- ☐ Irrigation Design
- ☐ Consulting
- ☐ Home
- ☐ Other _____

Please rate your agreement with the following statements.

3. I feel that the general education courses have prepared me for practical applications in the program.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

4. The program has met the expectations I had when I entered the program.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. The information I have received in this program relates to what I do or will do in my job.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

6. The program has given me a better understanding of safety factors when using landscaping tools and equipment.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

7. I feel the instruction and training I received at SSCC is of high quality and is current with industry standards.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

8. The instruction and training I am receiving at SSCC will be useful on the job.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

9. I am satisfied with the instruction in the program.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

PLEASE USE THE NEXT PAGE FOR ANY COMMENTS THAT YOU FEEL MAY IMPROVE THE PROGRAM.

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SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
GARDEN CENTER

CUSTOMER SURVEY

	Very satisfied				Not at all satisfied
1. How satisfied are you with the services from the SSCC Garden Center?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How satisfied are you with the prices at the SSCC Garden Center?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How satisfied are you with the appearance of the SSCC Garden Center?	1	2	3	4	5

4. Have you recommended the SSCC Garden Center to your friends?

   YES ☐ NO ☐

5. How often have you shopped at the SSCC Garden Center in the last year?

   1 to 3 times ☐ 4 to 10 times ☐ more than 10 times ☐

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank You